

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

No rejections have been applied to claims 27 and 28. Thus, claims 27 and 28 are deemed to be allowable.

Claim 27 has been rewritten in independent form to include features of claims 23 and 25. New claims 42 and 43 are based on previous claims 24 and 26, respectively, which depended from previous base claim 23; claims 42 and 43 have been written to depend from new base claim 27. New claim 44 is a method claim that corresponds to the subject matter of apparatus claim 27.

Claims 23-26 and 29-41 have been cancelled.

The amended claims have been drafted to avoid the issues underlying the indefiniteness rejections applied to claims 26, 29 and 30 and do not present new issues or subject matter. The cancellation of claims 23-26 and 29-41 obviates the rejections applied thereto.

The Applicants respectfully submit that the amended and new claims patentably distinguish over the references applied to claims 23-26, which were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Gerson et al. (US 5,657,418) in view of Chen (EP 0673018).

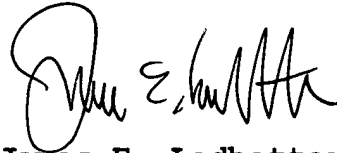
Claim 27 now recites a speech decoder having a first detector that detects lag parameter variations in a first frame and a second detector that detects lag parameter variations between the first frame and a second frame. A determiner of the speech decoder determines an output lag parameter based on detection results in the first detector and the second detector. That is, the invention defined by claim 27 detects lag parameter variations using two detecting operations. As a result, it is possible to increase the detection accuracy of lag parameter variations and improve the quality of decoded speech. The Applicants submit that the teachings of Gerson and Chen, considered alone or in combination, do not suggest these features.

Accordingly, the Applicants submit that Gerson and Chen do not render obvious the subject matter defined by claim 27. New claim 44 similarly recites the above-mentioned features distinguishing apparatus claim 27 from Gerson and Chen, but with respect to a method. Therefore, allowance of claims 27 and 44 and all claims dependent therefrom is warranted.

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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